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IMPERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES A NATIONAL GAIN.

BY COLONEL SIR G. S. CLARKE, K. C. M. G., F. R. S.

IN the lives of men and of nations there are marked turning points. A momentous decision has to be taken, or a chance presents itself which, once lost, cannot be recalled. The past history of the American people shows two such great national crises towering above all minor issues. In both, the solution was attained by war involving immense sacrifices; but looking back through the years, with vision unclouded by the stormy passions of the moment, we recognize that the decision in each case was fraught with permanent benefit to the progress of the world. When, after the close of the Seven Years' War, the relations between Great Britain and her North American colonies became strained, and successive measures of oppression led to the Boston outbreak of 1773 and to the active hostilities of 1775, the choice of two courses lay with the leaders of the revolt. They might have determined to continue to oppose the specific acts of the mother country, which constituted their real grievance, in the hope that a change of policy would come to their relief. Or they could cut the Gordian knot by a declaration of independence, and assume the tremendous responsibilities involved in the foundation of a new State. We cannot now know what would have been the result of the adoption of the first course. There was

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in England a great body of opinion—too generally forgotten in America to-day—which ranged itself from the first on the side of the colonies. Speaking in the House of Commons in 1766, Pitt declared that “this kingdom has no right to lay a tax upon the colonies. . . . Taxation is no part of the governing or legislative power. The distinction between legislation and taxation is essential to liberty.” And in a little known private letter written after the surrender at Saratoga,* he thus characterized the situation :

“How decisive and how interesting are the ways of Providence ! The sentiment and the conduct of the American Colonies, full of nobleness and humanity ! On the side of the Royalists, native English spirit, not to be extinguished—thank God—by *enslaving* principles and *peremptory nonsensical orders* ! When will national blindness fall from our eyes, and the *gutta serena* be taken off that sight which should behold all with an equal view ? . . . I rejoice that the Americans have behaved *in victory* like men who were actuated *by principle* : not by motives of a less elevated nature. . . . I would as soon *subscribe to Transubstantiation as to sovereignty (by right) in the Colonies.*”

Contemporary expressions of this nature could be indefinitely multiplied. The thirteen revolting colonies were distinctively British in sentiment and in nationality, and it was inevitable that they should receive support from their late fellow citizens, who, in parallel circumstances, would have adopted the same line of action. On the other hand, the political conditions of the mother country were not at the time favorable to an entirely new departure in colonial policy, and hostilities once commenced tended to strengthen the forces of reaction.

The first great turning point in American history was determined by a purely British people, few in number but instinct with the spirit of human liberty. Washington and John Adams followed directly in the footsteps of Cromwell and Hampden. The Revolution of 1776 was the lineal descendant and even the logical consequence of that which began in 1642. To America, the 4th of July was the dawn of a new nation; to Great Britain it was the real starting point of a new era which has witnessed the firm establishment, on the basis of equal rights, of her present colonial empire. We cannot tell whether, if in 1776 the “United Colonies” had decided to temporize instead of declaring that they “are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States,” the mother country would have fully learned the great lesson

* To the Earl of Shelburne, Dec. 15, 1777.

then roughly administered. But we now see clearly that this decision led to the uprising of a national spirit to which is directly due the marvellous development of the United States, and that Great Britain, shorn of her oldest and greatest dependencies, gave proof of energies stimulated, and of vigor enhanced.

In 1861, the American people, grown to thirty millions, no longer distinctly British, were brought face to face with a second great crisis. The subordinate issues were curiously complex; but one question of vital import to the future of the nation dominated and included all others. Should the Union be maintained at any sacrifice? The immense majority of Americans answered in the affirmative, and many thousands laid down their lives for a cause which strongly appealed to all that was best in the opinion of the old mother country. "We see," said John Bright, in the House of Commons,* "that the government of the United States has for two years past been contending for its life, and we know that it is contending necessarily for human freedom. That government affords the remarkable example—offered for the first time in the history of the world—of a great government coming forward as the organized defender of law, freedom and equality." The democracy of Great Britain was throughout staunch to the cause of the Union. "I know," said the same statesman,† "that there are ministers of state who do not wish that this insurrection should break up the American nation; that there are members of our aristocracy who are not afraid of the shadow of the Republic; that there are rich men, many, who are not depraved by their riches; that there are public writers of conscience and honor who will not barter human rights for the patronage of the great." These words were true, and the attitude of the Lancashire operatives, reduced to the verge of starvation because the mass of the American people had decided to uphold the Union at all cost, is a far better index of real British feeling than the diatribes of certain newspapers. Most unfortunately the utterances of a noisy minority in this country alone reached the United States. The broader and deeper currents of thought were then and have been since all unrecognized.

In 1861, as in 1776, the mass of the American people ac-

* June 30, 1863.

† Birmingham, Dec. 18, 1862.

cepted a tremendous responsibility. The national will, personified in Lincoln as in Washington, rose superior to the crisis. The Union was saved, and the gain was world-wide. At both of these great turning points in history, self-reliance and firm faith in the destiny of America determined the issues, and the parallel is manifest. The qualities which called a new State into existence in 1776 and saved that State from disruption in 1861-5 are the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon race, which American citizenship has always been able to impart to the mixed nationalities attracted into its fold.

In the year now past, another vital question of supreme importance for good or evil presented itself for decision, and again, as I firmly believe, the true path has been chosen. Writing nearly five years ago, I ventured to state that "a policy of abstention from the responsibilities of a great nation has become impossible to the American people," * and last year I pointed out that "it is a loss to the world that the United States, with their growing trade interests, second only to our own, have so far failed to accept the position of a great power with the corresponding responsibilities." †

When the long inevitable war with Spain broke out, one certain result was clear to every student of history. Whatever were the illusions cherished in April last, the moment was evidently at hand when the American people would be brought face to face with the alternative of accepting or repudiating direct responsibility for the restoration and maintenance of law and order in Cuba and the Philippine Islands. The war could end only in one way, and when once the feeble rule of Spain was shattered, anarchy would necessarily supervene in her distant possessions if the strong hand of a great power were not forthcoming to protect the hapless populations. The case of the British intervention in Egypt in 1882 offered a close parallel. The occupation was to be temporary; approximate dates of withdrawal were officially announced; but duties toward a semi-civilized people, whether rightly or wrongly assumed by a great nation, cannot be abandoned without a loss of honor.‡ An action such as

* NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, March, 1894.

† *Nineteenth Century*, February, 1893.

‡ Cyprus, acquired in 1878, is another case in point. The island possesses no naval or military importance and its occupation is of no advantage to Great Britain. If, however, it were abandoned, great injustice would be inflicted on the numerous persons, the value of whose property and interests has been created by British rule.

those in Manila Bay and at Tel-el-Kebir creates a new situation. In the one case, the symbol of Spanish power in the Philippines and the link connecting them with the governing State were destroyed; in the other, the army, the only organized force in Egypt, and with it the machinery of government, were broken up. In either case, direct responsibility devolved upon the victor.

As soon, therefore, as the recent hostilities came to an end, the many friends of the United States in England carefully watched the currents of popular feeling. Would the new duties be frankly accepted? Would the manifest imperial destiny of the American people be now realized? Or would the dead letter of the farewell message of Washington so dominate opinion as to prevent, or at least postpone, a new departure? These were the questions which engrossed all thoughtful minds on this side of the Atlantic.

As to Cuba, there could be no doubt. The war was undertaken in order to put an end to a government which had failed in its most elementary duties, and had directly caused a wholesale destruction of life and the devastation of a rich island within a few hours' steam of the shores of the Republic. Whatever steps were necessary to establish order, to secure human liberty and to promote prosperity, would certainly be taken by the United States. An Armenia or a Crete lying a hundred miles from the Land's End would have been freed many years ago. Moreover, the idea of exercising authority over Cuba had grown familiar. By geographical position it was marked out as the certain ultimate inheritance of the United States; its people and natural features were widely known; a protectorate or annexation would not involve any entanglement of American "peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, humor or caprice;" the fleet, almost in home waters, could control its communications. In the case of the Sandwich Islands, also, the conditions were comparatively simple. The group, though isolated, is too far removed from the centers of foreign naval forces to create great demands for its defence; the population was unlikely to give trouble, and already American influence was paramount at Hawaii. Captain Mahan seems to have believed that Great Britain had persistently endeavored to thwart American aspirations in this direction; but, as I pointed out in February

last,* “if these islands are now annexed, not the smallest protest, opposition or resentment will be forthcoming in this country,” and he would probably admit the accuracy of my forecast. Nevertheless, the annexation found many opponents in the United States, whose views suggested misgivings as to the solution of the infinitely more important question of the future of the Philippine Islands. This was the real turning point, and some hesitation before taking a step fraught with momentous consequences was natural. The thirty millions of 1861 had become seventy. The admixture of foreign races had further encroached upon the population of British descent; but, as Dr. Lyman Abbott has pointed out,† whatever the composition of the United States, their ethical and political system, their sense of liberty, and their restless energy, are “peculiarly Anglo-Saxon.” The impulse toward expansion, the instinct of empire and the unwillingness to shrink from a great responsibility, were ingrained in the genius of the nation.

“If we shall stand still
In fear our motives will be mock’d and carp’d at,
We should take root here where we sit, or sit
State statues only.”

So wrote Shakespeare; so—unconsciously, perhaps—the American people reasoned when the third great turning point in their history presented itself. The same decision would infallibly have been arrived at by Great Britain in similar circumstances, and to us the knowledge that the United States have freely elected to abandon the policy of isolation, to follow in the footsteps of the “ancient mother” and to assume their rightful place among the nations of the world, is a source of unmixed satisfaction.

In 1762, American troops were present with the force under Sir George Pocock and Lord Albemarle which captured Havana.‡ In the same year, Manila fell to an expeditionary force under Admiral Cornish and General Draper, and its surrender “comprehended that not only of the whole country, of which it is the capital, but of all those numerous and valuable islands which are its dependencies.”§ The town of Manila was, according to the custom of the times, ransomed for a sum of one million sterling,

* *Nineteenth Century*.

† *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*, May, 1898.

‡ American troops were also present with the force under Generals Wentworth and Guise, which landed in Guantanamo Bay in 1741.

§ *Annual Register*, 1763.

of which the greater part was never paid.* Under the Treaty of Paris in 1763, with the total disregard of relative values which British statesmen have frequently displayed, Havana and the Philippine Islands were returned to Spain in exchange for Florida and the right of log cutting in Honduras. That, after a lapse of one hundred and thirty-five years, the Pearl of the Antilles and the rich islands of the China Sea should have again, and this time permanently, fallen under the sway of the English-speaking people, is a curiously interesting historical development. The United States have stepped into the place which might have been ours, and have fulfilled the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Whether the consequences of the supremely important new departure are realized seems doubtful. The United States have brought under their rule vast tracts of territory. The process of absorption has been carried on without effort and without apparent effect upon the machinery of government. It may naturally be thought that the placing of the Philippine Islands on the footing of a "territory" is a measure akin to that adopted in California in 1846—more difficult, perhaps, by reason of the distance and of the large native population, but differing in degree and not in principle. On the other hand, while American writers have dwelt upon the immensity of the task undertaken and laid stress upon the want of experience and of previous preparation of the United States for the discharge of their new obligations, few have drawn attention to the moral gain thus arising.

Senator John T. Morgan admits that "the situation imposes upon the American people a difficult and responsible task, in giving a proper direction to the future of those insular people that are now left in a chaotic condition."† He believes, however, that "annexation will not be a necessary or proper result" of the naval and military action taken at Manila, and he alludes to the "temporary necessity of preserving the peace in these islands until the rightful government of their people has been established on a safe foundation." We have heard of this "temporary necessity" before in relation to India, to Egypt and to Tunis; but events have shown that a great and progressive power, in order to give "a proper direction to the future" of semi-

* Manila had previously been taken by a British force in 1757.

† NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, June, 1898.

civilized or uncivilized peoples, and to establish over them "a rightful government" on a "safe foundation," incurs responsibilities which deepen and extend with the years. The United States cannot be content with occupying a fringe of coast line, and leaving great areas unexplored and undeveloped, as was Spain in the Philippines, as is Holland in Sumatra. Barbarism cannot be tolerated by a great power controlling territory lying close to one of the great highways of the world. The period at which the mixed population of more than seven millions will attain to a capacity for self-government lies far off in the dim future. Senator Morgan's idea that the islands, after a brief period of tuition, will be able to manage for themselves, directly contradicts the teaching of history.

To Mr. Andrew Carnegie the question presents itself in a purely commercial aspect. The islands "will yield us nothing and probably be a source of annual expense." * They will necessitate the maintenance of an "enormous army and navy." They may involve foreign complications, and so disturb the serene horizon of the United States. "The sagacious policy of keeping possessions and power concentrated" ought to be resolutely upheld, which would logically entail the abandonment of foreign commerce and rigid restrictions upon the employment of American capital abroad. Broadly speaking, Mr. Carnegie appears to dread expansion on the ground that it might, in some way not clearly defined, interfere with the material prosperity, the luxury and the security of the people of the United States.

In these two articles, written from a widely different standpoint, and in many others, I do not trace the faint glimmer of the great truth that the responsibilities of empire may be a moral gain to the nation which accepts them from lofty motives. Both Senator Morgan and Mr. Carnegie, however, unconsciously illustrate the urgent need of a new political departure. The former rejects the idea of any permanent occupation of the Philippines "because the United States are, in every sense, American," and these islands "are not within the sphere of American political influence, but are Asiatic, and should remain Asiatic." Domesticity is one of the virtues; but the man whose whole interests and responsibilities are limited to his home circle, lives at best a maimed and stunted life.

* NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW August, 1898.

Self-centered nations are incomplete organisms which can never attain full dignity and vigor. If the Senators of Rome in 260, B. C., after the subjugation of Italy, had set their faces against expansion, proclaiming that foreign territories were "not within the sphere of Roman political influence," they would have indefinitely retarded the progress of the world.

On the other hand, Mr. Carnegie would abandon the Philippines to chaos or to a scramble among powers to whom liberty, as we understand the word, is yet unknown, because "Americans cannot be grown there." In his view,* "the most grievous burden which Great Britain has upon her shoulders is that of India, for there it is impossible for our race to grow."

It is true that our race cannot colonize India, cannot become hereditary magnates, territorial or industrial, in any part of British Asia; but the task of governing India, heavy as it is, confers upon us a moral advantage which defies all estimate. The greatest gains of nations and of individuals cannot be presented in the form of a balance sheet. European peoples vaguely regard India as a perennial mine of material wealth, upon which Great Britain makes huge annual drafts. This is an absolute illusion; but to India we owe in great measure the training of our best manhood. India makes men, though it does not "grow" them, and the influence, example and education of the men whom India makes reacts powerfully upon the whole social and political structure of the nation.

A young civilian goes to India to find himself at once in a position of great individual responsibility, to represent justice and right among a horde of Asiatics in some isolated country station, to rise rapidly to the rule of many millions. A young officer joins a regiment from the military college and may shortly find himself the leader of native troops in a trying situation; or—such cases occur—he may be placed in charge of a plague district in a great town, with duties calling for high administrative qualities combined with the utmost tact. In this way men are made, and when the continuous interchanges between England and India and the number of relatives and friends who are carefully following each Indian career—even those that are humble—are remembered, some idea of what our great dependency gives back to us may be attained. In a lesser degree, Egypt, South,

* Expressed also in *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* for June, 1893.

East and West Africa and other portions of the empire are contributing continuously to the national vigor; while, in the great self-governing colonies, strong and self-reliant peoples are growing up under the ægis of the British flag, which already teach lessons to the mother State. Not long ago I read a short biography of Major "Roddy" Owen, written by his sister, which throws a strong light upon the careers which attract the young Briton of to-day. Owen was the finest steeplechase rider in the army, and one of its most popular officers. Before him lay a life replete with pleasures and comfort. In 1892, he seems to have become dissatisfied alike with victories on the turf and with social success, and to have craved to "do something for the empire." On the morrow of winning the Grand National, he left England to receive three wounds in leading Hausas across a West African river. Thence he went to Uganda and alone, under circumstances of the greatest difficulty and suffering, he carried the flag to Wadelai. In 1895, he took part in the Chitral expedition, and helped to lead two charges of native cavalry, subsequently undertaking an adventurous solitary journey to the Pamirs. In the following year, he joined the Nile expedition and died of cholera alone among the Alighat Arabs, whose affection he had quickly gained. Owen's career is typical of many, and so long as examples of this nature continue to inspire our young men by the thousand, the nation will gain more than words can express. I do not wish to lay stress on the military advantage arising from the fact that a large proportion of our officers and men have experience of campaigning in wild countries. This advantage will show itself in any great emergency. I prefer to dwell upon the moral gain, the frequent concentration of the public mind upon other than domestic affairs, the antidote to the patent evils arising from mere material prosperity, and the high ideal of manhood which is maintained directly and indirectly by imperial responsibilities. The empire, with all its risks, anxieties and burdens, is now more than ever producing men.

Looking back upon the past year, it is impossible not to recognize the immense influence of the late war upon the American people. Mr. Carnegie tells us that "the United States, thus far in their history, have no page reciting self-sacrifice made for others; all their gains have been for themselves." This statement, if true, would supply a powerful argument in favor of the

policy which he condemns. Isolation from the affairs of the world and abstention from the responsibilities of a great power are necessarily incompatible with "self-sacrifice made for others."

In redeeming the world from barbarism, many nations have taken part, with varying success. Russia in Central Asia and France in Algeria, Tunis and West Africa, have accomplished good work which, by reason of unfortunate international jars, has not been adequately appreciated in this country. Italy, after sad blunders, is now ameliorating the conditions of human life in her Red Sea province. Germany, in East and West Africa, and now in China, is removing abuses. In so far as the work carried out by these nations has been beneficial to native races, it has reacted upon themselves, for "mercy . . . is twice blessed."

Meanwhile, the United States, absorbed in the development of their vast territories, in the race for wealth, and in internal politics, remained self-centered. The late war swiftly infused new aspirations into the national life, and upraised nobler ideals. Sympathy for the perishing *reconcentrados*, warm appreciation of heroism by sea and land, kindly thoughts for the vanquished, indignation aroused by the easily preventable sufferings of the brave troops who had worthily upheld the national honor—such were the impulses which stirred the hearts of the American people. A wave of generous emotion passed over the land, and the mere politician was for the time submerged. The recent New York election is the significant proof of a new standard of merit and of the triumphant assertion of new and loftier claims upon the popular suffrage. Before the war Colonel Roosevelt's chances would have been *nil*. After the war, the gallant soldier and man of action could successfully hold his own against the wire-puller. In this there is a distinct moral gain. It is a healthy and a hopeful sign that the mind of the New York elector turned to the "stricken field" before Santiago rather than to narrow local considerations. Already, therefore, the effect of "looking outward" * is clearly visibly. And, as President McKinley has stated,† "military service under the common flag and for a righteous cause has strengthened the national spirit, and served to cement more closely than ever the fraternal bonds between every section of the country."

* I borrow the words of Captain Mahan.

† Annual message, Dec. 5, 1898.

Henceforth the United States will occupy a new position among the nations of the world. They have, in effect, accepted responsibility for the righteous government of some ten millions of alien races. Their task, in the Philippines especially, will be difficult; but if it is approached with high aims and without seeking direct advantage, the difficulties will be successfully surmounted. The secret of the government of Eastern peoples mainly consists in the art of selecting agents of the right stamp, and the United States possesses men in abundance who are capable of regenerating the lost colonies of Spain. It is only necessary to make the selection without fear or favor, and with a single eye to the general good. The marvellous prosperity of the protected States of the Malay Peninsula, inaugurated by Sir Andrew Clarke and carried out by a few British representatives, acting through native rulers, and respecting native prejudices, shows what can be accomplished in conditions closely resembling that of the Philippine Islands. What we have done, Americans imbued with the same love of liberty and reverence for justice can undertake without doubts or misgivings, and the incalculable moral gain which imperial responsibilities have conferred upon us will be their reward. Reflex action upon the United States will be one of the most important results of the new departure.

A great nation once committed to expansion can neither draw back nor set a limit to its inherent energies. For the moment the future of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and the Sandwich Islands is the subject of speculation; but President McKinley touches upon two other questions, which will shortly assume great importance. "The construction" of the Nicaragua Canal, he states, "is now more than ever indispensable, and our policy more imperatively than ever calls for its control by this government." The interests of the world, no less than those of the United States, demand that this linking of the oceans shall be realized. Those interests also require that the waterway should be absolutely controlled by the United States. We do not want to repeat in the Western Hemisphere the political complications in which the Suez Canal is involved. But the policy indicated by the President will infallibly entail new relations and new responsibilities in regard to the Central American republics. Again, in becoming an Asiatic power, the United States will stand face to face with the great problem of China. "If no discriminating

treatment of American citizens and their trade be found to exist, or be hereafter developed," states the President, "the desire of this government would appear to be realized." This is precisely the British view, and at last the English-speaking peoples stand side by side in upholding a principle of the highest international importance.

With the new year a fresh chapter in the history of the United States opens. The fair white pages await the impress of statesmanship, and I firmly believe that they are destined to bear the record of honorable work in the cause of liberty, justice and humanity. One European nation alone has cordially welcomed the new departure of America, and it is surely a happy augury that the English-speaking peoples have at this precise juncture recognized their need of each other. This suffices, and of the artificial and temporary arrangements miscalled "alliances," which provide occupation for European chancelleries, there is no necessity. Should a common emergency arise, we shall be able to undertake combined action with a full mutual understanding hitherto attained by no alliance. In war, the strength of the United States and Great Britain would be represented by the sum of their resources, and no correcting factor is required, because the genius of the two nations has a common origin. In peace, as Dr. Lyman Abbott has pointed out, if they "work together for the world's civilization, no reactionary forces can withstand their combined effort."

G. S. CLARKE.